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UNH's Carsey Institute Receives Grant To Develop National Program On Rural Families And Communities

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May 16, 2005

DURHAM, N.H. – The Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire has received a three-year grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation to build awareness and understanding of rural families and communities and the unique issues they face through a series of reports and policy briefs for community development practitioners and policymakers.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to improving outcomes for the most vulnerable kids and families in the United States. It awarded the Carsey Institute around \$200,000 a year, anticipated to extend for a total of three years.

“We’re pleased to support the Carsey Institute in its efforts to both elevate the understanding of conditions faced by vulnerable kids and families in our rural communities and provide policymakers with the tools and information they need to help rural families succeed,” said Miriam Shark, senior associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

“The Casey grant is a wonderful launch for us,” said Mil Duncan, founding director of the Carsey Institute. “With this generous grant, we can provide good empirical analysis on the demographic and economic changes sweeping over rural communities and the challenges they present for children, youth and families. Our work will be a bridge between the research community, policymakers and practitioners who need a better understanding of what these changes are, how they vary by region and what their policy implications are.

Each report will focus on a particular topic, summarize the research around it, identify current trends and look at its effect on different regions of the country. In addition, each report will highlight a program that is successfully addressing the issue. The first report on job loss in rural America and its effects on families will be released this summer. Future reports will look at substance abuse in rural America, immigration into the areas, and balancing work and family.

In addition to four reports each year, the grant will allow Carsey researchers to produce policy briefs on federal and state policies, like Medicaid, Social Security, the Earned Income Tax Credit and affordable housing, that affect rural residents.

“There is a pressing need to help Americans better understand what is happening to rural families and communities, and what investments can make a difference,” Duncan said. “Better policies must be developed on the foundation of solid understanding, not myths, out of date information or perceptions. With this grant, we can take the research of experts in the field and

make it relevant to the people making decisions.”

The Carsey Institute conducts research that contributed to public dialogue on family and community issues throughout the United States, with special attention to small cities and rural areas, and provides opportunities for outreach and engagement with public, private and nonprofit groups working to improve opportunities for families and communities. Established in 2002 through a generous gift to UNH, the institute was created to address the new reality of families and women, work and communities in the 21st century. For more information visit <http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu>.

Since 1948, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has worked to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The primary mission of the foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. For more information visit <http://www.aecf.org>.